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Hebden to Grassington Via The Lead Mines

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Road parking in Hebden village outside the Methodist Chapel (SE 027630)
Ordnance Survey map	OL2 Yorkshire Dales – Southern and Western area.
Distance	8 miles
Date of Walk	8 September 2014
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: This walk from Hebden could equally be started from Grassington, as it is circular but parking in Hebden is free! Also, Grassington provides a great lunch stop, with lots of choice - I particularly like The Foresters Arms. Also, in this direction, the hard work (such as there is) happens first, leaving a leisurely and attractive post lunch walk back from Grassington along the River Wharfe, passing Linton Falls. There is a slightly shorter route back to Hebden after seeing Linton Falls, marked in green on the sketch map but it seems a shame to miss the riverside walk and the somewhat unique suspension bridge.

The route passes through some of the old lead mining area with interesting relics to see. The Grassington area has been a centre for lead mining since at least the 1600s and if you look at the 1:25000 Ordnance Survey map (OL2 Yorkshire Dales – Southern and Western) to the north of Grassington, you will see a large area with mining notations. This walk only covers a fraction of what is there to see.

Over the history of the mining here, dams and watercourses expanded until at one point there was a network spreading over eleven kilometres. Eleven waterwheels sites have been identified and a couple of them are passed on this walk.

Maximum prosperity arrived between 1821 and 1861 then a steady decline set in, as the mines became exhausted and foreign imports grew. The last activity, to recover ore from spoil heaps, ended in 1963.

There are a number of information boards which tell you something about the mining.

A word of warning – stay on the obvious tracks. There are unmarked mine shafts on these moors and not even any guarantee all the locations are known. Some may have a fragile covering and be invisible until

As you approach Yarnbury, you could take the opportunity to visit Yarnbury Henge. This is clearly shown on the OS map, south of Yarnbury.

Refreshments are available in Grassington at a variety of pubs/cafes, at the Clarendon Hotel in Hebden and at The Old School Tea Rooms also in Hebden.

The walk starts outside the Methodist chapel in the small village of Hebden where the road is wide enough to park and there are benches convenient for boot changing. Hebden is on the B6265 between Grassington and Pately Bridge. Turn south into the village off this road and the chapel is on the right after a couple of hundred yards

Start: Facing the chapel (SE 027630), turn right and walk through the village to the B6265. Cross and stay on the main tarmac lane straight ahead for just over half a mile. As the track bends left at Hole Bottom, by some stone cottages (SE 024641) (Jerry and Ben's Holiday Cottages at the time of writing), go straight ahead in front of the cottages following the public bridleway sign for "Yarnbury 1½ miles.

You are now on a broad stony track which soon crosses a bridge over Hebden Beck, to follow the right hand bank. You soon pass evidence of mining, not least an old shaft (now a watercourse) and a waterwheel pit). Stay on the track, through a gate with a sign telling you there are stepping stones in 100 yards. The track forks, take the left fork.

Stay close to the right hand bank of the beck until you come to the stepping stones (three large rectangular blocks). Cross the beck then follow the left hand beck. The track soon crosses the beck again but stick to the narrower path along the left hand bank which rejoins the main track after it crosses the beck yet again, further on.

Keep to the main track, close to the beck, as it passes the old spoil heaps, then follow it as it swings left (SE 025658), away from the stream, ignoring a fork off to the right. You pass an old lime kiln. As the track climbs, look back, to see the huge chimney on Grassington Moor, a remnant of a smelt mill and a well known local landmark.

As the track starts to level out, turn right through a gateway marked with a public bridleway sign.

You pass some old spoil heaps and remains of old mine buildings, which are Scheduled Ancient Monuments and it is worth a diversion to explore these and read the information boards.

The route continues through the un-gated gateway on the unmistakable track. On meeting another broad track (SE 020659), turn left to Yarnbury.

At Yarnbury, take the track to its right, alongside the house, following a fingerpost (which is on the opposite side of the main track) "Byciffe Road 2 miles". At the garages belonging to the house, the route passes to the right of the fence. It soon branches right on, a grassy path, marked with yellow topped posts.

The path curves right, through some old grass covered spoil heaps to a walkers' gate (SE 014661). Through this, turn left on a broad track which you follow for half a

mile. There are good views here across Wharfedale and right, across Grassington Moor.

The walled track comes to an end in more open pasture. Follow the wall as it curves left and cross the ladder stile in the corner (SE 010668), to follow the obvious path down to a stepped slit stile in the wall. This is a rather awkward stile as the stones on the far side slope away from you. It will be fun in wet/icy weather!

The route to Grassington is pretty obvious, via a series of stiles. At a crossroads of tracks, go straight on.

Eventually, the path drops down to a wooden stile by a gate. Cross this and after a short section of broad track, turn left.

You arrive at a road junction where a road sign tells you that you have been walking down Back Lane. Turn left and at the next junction, turn right for Grassington Centre.

Sample some of the delights of Grassington, then proceed downhill to the A6265 and turn left. Cross the road at the main car park, then, bear left across the car park, to the far corner, where you will find the narrow path down to Linton Falls.

Do not cross the footbridge but turn left on the footpath (SE 001634), just before it.

It is now a matter of following the river footpath to Hebden. It does briefly exit into a road via a gated step stile (SE 006634). Turn right past the fish farm to rejoin the path by the river. Pretty Linton Church is visible across the river and the alternative path to Hebden soon follows, should you want it.

Otherwise, stay on the riverbank until, at Hebden suspension footbridge (built by the local blacksmith William Bell and opened in 1885), a path turns off to the left (SE 026624). Take this to the road and turn right. Go over the river bridge then turn left in the direction of the fingerpost for "Hebden ½ mile". The path passes between the two bungalows (SE 027624).

Keep straight ahead at the fish farm (another one) crossing the stream by the single slab bridge. The path now follows the left hand bank of Hebden Beck before rising to the road opposite the Methodist Chapel where you started.

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